

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वराजिबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

XIX.—Continued.

Subjects.—*The masses are now waking up and beginning to demand their legitimate rights from the higher classes.—If the higher classes help them in this matter, it will conduce to the welfare of both.—If the masses are taught in the spirit of the Gita, then instead of giving up their own hereditary calling, they will perform it with greater glory to themselves.—The result that will accrue if the higher classes refuse to help the masses now in the way suggested.]*

Disciple.— Sir, although our power of originality is less than that of other countries, still the lower classes of India are being guided by our intelligence. So where will they get the power and culture to overcome the higher classes in the struggle for existence ?

Swamiji.— Never mind if they have not read a few books like you,—if they have not acquired your tailor-made civilisation. What do these matter? But they are the backbone of the nation in all countries. If these lower classes stop work where will you get your food and clothing from? If the sweepers of Calcutta stop work for a day it creates a panic, if they strike for three days the whole town will

be depopulated by epidemic outbreak. If the labourers stop work, your supply of food and clothes also stops. And you regard them as low-class people and vaunt about your own culture !

Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so long uniformly like machines guided by human intelligence and the clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruits of their labour and earning. In every country this has been the case. But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact and making a united front against this, determined to exact their

legitimate dues. The masses of Europe and America have been the first to awaken and have already begun the fight. Signs of this awakening have shown themselves in India too, as is evident from the number of strikes among the lower classes now-a-days. Now the upper classes will not be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights.

Therefore I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, "You are our brothers—a part and parcel of our bodies—we love you and do not hate you." If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold. Kindle their knowledge with the help of modern science. Teach them history, geography, science, literature and along with these the deep truths of religion. In exchange for that teaching the poverty of the teachers will also disappear. By mutual exchange both will become friendly to each other.

Disciple.— But, Sir, with the spread of learning among them, they too will in course of time have fertile brains but become idle and inactive like us and live on the fruits of the labour of the next lower classes.

Swamiji.— Why shall it be so? Even with the awakening of knowledge, the potter will remain a potter—the fisherman a fisherman—the peasant a peasant. Why should they leave their hereditary calling? सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत्— "Don't give up the work to which you are born even if it be attended with defects." If they are taught in this way, why should they give up their respective callings?

Rather they will apply their knowledge to the better performance of the work to which they have been born. A number of geniuses are sure to arise from among them in course of time. You (the higher classes) will take these into your own fold. The Brahmanas had acknowledged the valiant king Viswamitra as a Brahmana, and think how grateful the whole Kshatriya race became to the Brahmanas for this act! By such sympathy and co-operation even birds and beasts become one's own—what to speak of men!

Disciple.— Sir, what you say is true, but there yet seems to be a wide gulf between the higher and lower classes. To bring the higher classes to sympathise with the lower, seems to be a difficult affair in India.

Swamiji.— But without that there is no well-being for you upper classes. You will be destroyed by internecine quarrels and fights—which you have been doing so long. When the masses will wake up they will come to understand your oppression on them and by a puff of their mouth you will be entirely blown off! It is they who have introduced civilisation amongst you; and it is they who will then pull it down. Think how at the hands of the Gauls, the mighty ancient Roman civilisation crumbled into dust! Therefore I say, try to rouse these low classes from slumber by imparting learning and culture to them. When they will awaken—and awaken one day they must—they also will not forget your good services to them and will remain grateful to you.

After such conversation Swamiji addressing the disciple said, "Let these subjects drop now—come, tell me what you have decided. Do something, whatever it be. Either go in for some business, or like us come to the path of real Sannyasa,

"आत्मनो मोक्षार्थं जगद्धिताय च"—"For your own salvation and for the good of the world." The latter path is of course the best way there is. What good will it do to be a worthless householder? You have understood that everything in life is transitory, "मलिनीदलगतजलमन्वितरत्नम् तद्वज्जीवनमतिशयचपलम्"—"Life is as unstable as the water on the lotus-leaf." Therefore if you have the enthusiasm for acquiring this knowledge

of the Atman, do not wait any more but come forward immediately. "तदहरेव प्रव्रजेत्"—"The very day that you feel dispassion for the world, that very day renounce and take to Sannyasa." Sacrifice your life for the good of others and go round the doors of people, carrying this message of fearlessness—"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्स्य वरान् निबोधत"—"Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached."

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE conjoint action of good and evil, of virtue and vice, is one of the basic facts of life. "Each hollow crests the wave," and good is followed by evil, pleasure by pain, virtue by vice, knowledge by ignorance. Sometimes the clouds sail off from the face of the eternal blue, and man enjoys the unobstructed gaze of his infinite nature, then again a cloud, "no bigger than a man's hand," appears in the horizon, which grows bigger and bigger, the sky becomes overcast by piled masses of clouds upon clouds creating primeval darkness. The waters of the lake are covered over by a thick overgrowth of weeds and mosses which hide the water beneath, man clears a bit of space and drinks the pure crystal waters of the lake; but before he is aware the moss dances forward from all sides and covers up the cleared space, hiding the underlying waters completely from view. Such is the stuff human life is made of.

The greater the rise of the wave, the profounder the depths of the hollow which follow. Split up the electrical energy, and as the positive separates and accumulates, the negative also separates and

accumulates as a counter energy. This polarity of the dual action of two opposing forces constitutes the gist of existence. The higher the pitch of moral perfection, the greater the susceptibility to finer and finer, and hence stronger and more insidious, *vasanas*, desires, passions and impulses,—which are unsuspected by the common people. Even our virtues are going towards destruction and to be alternated by a darker phase, according to the law of change which governs our phenomenal existence.

Both good and evil, virtue and vice are manufactured from a third substance which being controlled and mastered, both good and evil are controlled and one goes beyond the succession of good and evil, virtue and vice. Virtue and vice, holiness and impurity, good and evil are different manifestations in different degrees of one Unit Existence and so long as this Unit Existence is not realised and mastered, there will be no safety in our moral or religious life; we shall be in subjection to the change of good and evil, of virtue and vice. The goal of moral and religious endeavours should be to reach this unity

—the Unit Existence, which is our real self. And when that is known, both good and evil stand controlled, we stand up free, master of ourselves and go beyond the pale of all laws,—of virtue alternating with vice, of good with evil.

A good character is one in which by the continued action of good thoughts and impressions, the bad thoughts and tendencies are held down and kept in check in a corner of the mind. It is not that evil tendencies are completely killed out but their power of working evil is prevented from manifesting itself; and when through inadvertence and slackness in religious or moral culture they are not sufficiently watched and guarded against, they gather force from day to day and subsequently spring up into activity and invade the whole field of conscious activity. This accounts for many cases of slips and blackslidings in religious life. Through the long doing of good acts and thinking of good thoughts, the mind has acquired a certain involuntary power and tendency towards good in spite of itself, and this tendency turns it back from doing evil. But this is no sure and firm ground to stand upon. However long the interval, by the inevitable operation of change of the *gunas*, of the laws of phenomenal existence, virtue will be alternated by vice, good inevitably followed by evil, unless we transcend both good and evil and reach the Absolute and go beyond the pale of all phenomenal laws. The Absolute, beyond phenomena, the *nirguna*, *nirvisesha*, the qualitless, and undifferentiated Unit, the Brahman, is the final resting ground, reaching which both good and evil, virtue and vice are controlled and we go beyond the operation of all phenomenal laws and attain to safety.

Sri Ramakrishna brings this point home to us very vividly in the following saying of his: Vasistha, a great sage who had attained to a degree of illumination, was observed by Lakshmana as shedding tears in grief smitten by the death of his sons, and turning to his divine brother, Sri Ramachandra, he questioned, "It is indeed strange that such a great sage like Vasistha is shedding tears in *maya* at the loss of his sons," whereupon Sri Ramachandra answered, "There is nothing to be wondered at in this. He who has knowledge, is affected by ignorance also, he who has good is overcome by evil also; therefore, my brother, to reach perfection, go beyond both knowledge and ignorance, good and evil."

It is indeed a very dizzy height to attain to this pinnacle of spiritual perfection, and very few can expect to reach this height in a lifetime. But it is well to put ourselves in mind of the ultimate goal, the real haven of safety, otherwise we are liable to victimise ourselves by self-delusion and ideas of fancied safety. In the course of our religious life we attain to a good deal of control over our *indriyas* (sense-organs and nerve-centres) and feel able to control our motives and inner forces from within; we may not feel any strong evil promptings likely to draw us out. But yet there is no safety. We are still under the *gunas*, under the sway of phenomenal laws, which bring about the alternate play of good and evil, virtue and vice, however great the interval between the two phases. We are now under the influence of good tendencies, as formerly we were under bad, we have not gone beyond the laws of nature, we have not attained to freedom and self-mastery yet by trampling nature's laws under our feet. In the very good

tendencies there lurks the power of the evil, for they are two sisters, the two conjoint phases of nature's laws.

We read in the lives of saints and prophets of a state of realisation, which illustrates the attainment of this unity beyond duality, of a religious mood in which all the apparent duality is obliterated, a state of emotion so levelling and unifying, that all the values of life are engulfed in the vision of unity; the hand of the Lord is seen present in life, and equally so in the direst death; in pain and pleasure, in virtue and vice, in sin as in holiness, in good and in evil. Which to accept and which to avoid, is then the question that rises involuntarily to the lips. Then the eyes lose the power of seeing evil, and the mind loses the power of thinking evil. Swami Vivekananda thus speaks of his Master, "I myself have seen this man standing before those women whom society would not touch; falling at their feet, bathed in tears, saying, 'Mother, in one form Thou art in the street and in another form Thou art the Universe. I

salute Thee, Mother, I salute Thee.' Think of the blessedness of that life, when every woman face becomes transfigured, and only the face of the Divine Mother, the Blissful One, the Protectress of the human race, shines upon it!" This is what we want. Swami Vivekananda also speaks in the same strain: "The whole world worships ease and few dare to worship that which is painful. To rise above both is the idea of freedom. Unless man passes through this gate he cannot be free. We must learn how to worship and love Him in the thunderbolt, in shame, in sorrow, and in sin. All the world has ever been preaching the God of virtue, I preach a God of virtue and of sin in one. Take Him if you dare,—that is the one way to salvation, then alone will come to us the Truth ultimate which comes from the idea of Oneness. . . . Until we see nothing in the world but the Lord and the Lord Himself. All these evils will beset and we will make these distinctions, because it is only in the Lord, in the Spirit that we are one, and until we see God everywhere this unity will not exist for us."

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA

(An unpublished writing of the Swami Vivekananda.)

OM TAT SAT.

Om Namō Bhagavate Ramakrishṇaya.

नास्तौ सन् जायेत!—Existence cannot be produced by non-existence.

NON-EXISTENCE can never be the cause of what exists. Something cannot come out of nothing. That the law of causation is omnipotent and knows no time or place when it did not exist,

is a doctrine as old as the Aryan race, sung by their ancient poet-seers, formulated by their philosophers, and made the corner-stone upon which the Hindu man even of to-day builds his whole scheme of life.

There was an inquisitiveness in the race to start with, which very soon developed into bold analysis, and though in the first attempt the work turned out might be like the attempts of the future master-

sculptor with shaky hands, it very soon gave way to strict science, bold attempts and startling results.

Its boldness made them search every brick of their sacrificial altars; scan, cement and pulverise every word of their scriptures; arrange, re-arrange, doubt, deny or explain the ceremonies; turned their gods inside out, and assigned only a secondary place to their omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Creator of the universe, their ancestral Father-in-heaven; or threw Him altogether overboard as useless, and started a world-religion without Him with even now the largest following of any. It evolved the science of geometry from the arrangements of bricks to build various altars, and startled the world with astronomical knowledge that arose from the attempts to accurately time their worship and oblations. It made their contribution to the science of mathematics the largest of any race ancient or modern, and their knowledge of chemistry, of metallic compounds in medicine, their scale of musical notes, their invention of the bow-instruments of great service in the building of modern European civilisation. It led them to invent the science of building up the child mind through shining fables, which every child in every civilised country learns in a nursery or a school and carries an impress through life.

Behind and before this analytical keenness, covering it as in a velvet sheath, was the other great mental peculiarity of the race—poetic insight. Their religion, their philosophy, their history, their ethics, their politics were all inlaid in a flower-bed of poetic imageries—the miracle of language which they call Sanskrit, or perfected, lending itself to expressing and manipulating them better than any other tongue. The aid of melodious numbers was invoked

even to express the hard facts of mathematics.

This analytical power and the boldness of poetical visions which urged it onward are the two great internal causes in the make-up of the Hindu race. They together formed as it were the keynote to the national character. This combination is what is always making the race press onwards beyond the senses—the secret of those speculations which are like the steel blades they used to manufacture—cutting through bars of iron, yet pliable enough to be easily bent into a circle.

They wrought poetry in silver and gold; the symphony of jewels, the maze of marble wonders, the music of colours, the fine fabrics which belong more to the fairy-land of dreams than to the real—have back of them thousands of years of working of this national trait.

Arts and sciences, even the realities of domestic life, are covered with a mass of poetical conceptions and pressed forward, till the sensuous touches the super-sensuous, and the real gets the rose-hue of the unreal.

The earliest glimpses we have of this race shows them already in the possession of this characteristic, as an instrument of some use in their hands. Many forms of religion and society must have been left behind in the onward march, before we find them as depicted in the scriptures, the Vedas.

An organised Pantheon, elaborate ceremonials, divisions of society into hereditary classes necessitated by a variety of occupations, a great many necessities, and a good many luxuries of life are already there.

Most modern scholars are agreed that surroundings as to climate and conditions

purely Indian were not yet working on the race.

Onward through several centuries, we come to a multitude surrounded by snows of the Himalayas on the North and the heat of the South.—Vast plains, interminable forests, through which mighty rivers roll their tides. We catch a glimpse of different races—Dravidians, Tartars, and Aborigines pouring in their quota of blood, of speech, of manners and religions—and at last a great nation emerges to our view, still keeping the type of the Aryan; stronger, broader, and more organised by the assimilation.

We find the central assimilative core giving its type and character to the whole mass, clinging on with great pride to its name of "Aryan," and though willing to give other races the benefits of its civilisation, it was by no means willing to admit them within the "Aryan" pale.

The Indian climate again gave a higher direction to the genius of the race. In a land where nature was propitious and yielded easy victories, the national mind started to grapple and conquer the higher problems of life in the field of thought. Naturally the thinker, the priest, became the highest class in the Indian society, and not the man of the sword. The priests again, even at that dawn of history put most of their energy in elaborating rituals; and when the nation began to find the load of ceremonies and lifeless rituals too heavy,—came the first philosophical speculations, and the royal race was the first to break through the maze of killing rituals.

On the one hand, the majority of the priests impelled by economical considerations were bound to defend that form of religion which made their existence a necessity of society and assigned them the highest place in the scale of caste; on the

other hand, the king-caste, whose strong right hand guarded and guided the nation and who now found themselves as leaders in the higher thoughts also, were loath to give up the first place to men who only knew how to conduct a ceremonial. There were then others, recruited from both the priests and king-castes, who ridiculed equally the ritualists and philosophers, declared spiritualism as fraud and priestcraft, and upheld the attainment of material comforts as the highest goal of life. The people tired of ceremonials and wondering at the philosophers joined in masses the materialists. This was the beginning of that caste question and that triangular fight in India between ceremonials, philosophy and materialism which has come down unsolved to our own days.

The first solution of the difficulty attempted was by applying the eclecticism which from the earliest days had taught them to see in differences the same truth in various garbs. The great leader of this school, Krishna himself—of royal race—and his sermon, the Gita, have after various vicissitudes brought about by the upheavals of the Jains, the Buddhists and other sects, fairly established themselves as the "Prophet" of India and the truest philosophy of life. The tension though toned for the time did not satisfy the social wants which were among the causes—the claim of the king-race to stand first in the scale of caste and the popular intolerance of priestly privilege. Krishna had opened the gates of spiritual knowledge and attainment to all irrespective of sex or caste, but he left undisturbed the same problem on the social side. This again has come down to our own days, in spite of the gigantic struggle of the Buddhists, Vaishnavas etc. to attain to social equality for all.

Modern India admits spiritual equality of all souls—but strictly keeps the social difference.

Thus we find the struggle renewed all along the line in the seventh century before the Christian era and finally in the sixth, overwhelming the ancient order of things under Sakya Muni, the Buddha. In their reaction against the privileged priesthood they swept off almost every bit of the old ritual of the Vedas, subordinated the gods of the Vedas to the position of servants to their own human saints and declared the "Creator and Supreme Ruler" as an invention of priestcraft and superstition.

But the aim of Buddhism was reform against ceremonials requiring offerings of animals, against hereditary caste, exclusive priesthood and against belief in permanent souls. It never attempted to destroy the Vedic religion, or overturn the social order. It introduced a vigorous method, by organising a class of Sannyasins into a strong monastic brotherhood,

and the Brahmavadinis into a body of nuns,—by introducing images of saints in the place of altar-fires.

It is probable that the reformers had for centuries the majority of the Indian people with them. The older forces were never entirely pacified but they underwent a good deal of modification during the centuries of Buddhistic supremacy.

In ancient India the centres of national life were always the intellectual and spiritual and not political. Of old, as now, political and social power has been always subordinated to spiritual and intellectual. The outburst of national life was round colleges of sages and spiritual teachers. We thus find the Samities of the Panchalas, of the Kashyas (Benares), the Maithilas standing out as great centres of spiritual culture and philosophy, even in the Upanishads. Again these centres in turn became the focus of political ambition of the various divisions of the Aryans.

(To be continued).

• EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. •

(Translated from Bengali.)

CXLIV.

C/o E. T. Sturdy Esq.,
High View, &c.
1895.

Beloved Akhandananda,

I am glad to go through the contents of your letter. Your idea is grand but our nation is totally lacking in the faculty of organisation. It is this one drawback which produces all sorts of evil. We are altogether averse to making a common cause for anything. The first requisite for organisation is obedience. I do a little bit of work when I feel so disposed, and then let it go to the

dogs,—this kind of work is of no avail. We must have plodding industry and perseverance. Keep a regular correspondence, I mean, make it a point to write to me every month, or twice a month, what work you are doing, and what has been its outcome. We want here (in England) a Sannyasin well versed in English and Sanskrit. I shall soon go to America again, and he is to work here in my absence. Except S— and R— I find no one else for this task. I have sent money to S— and written to him to start at once. I have requested Rajaji that his Bombay agent may help S— in embarking. I forgot

to write,—but if you can take the trouble to do it, please send through S— a bag of *musting*, gram, and *arhar dāl*, also little of the spice called *methi*. Please convey my love to Pandit Narayan Das, Mr. Sankar Lal, Ojhaji, Doctor, and all. Do you think you can get the medicine for G—'s eyes here?—Everywhere you find patent medicines, which are all humbug. Please give my blessings to him and to the other boys. J— has founded a certain society at Meerut and wants to work conjointly with us. By the bye, he has got a certain paper too; send K— there, and let him start a Meerut centre, if he can, and try that the paper may be in Hindi. I shall help a little now and then. I shall send some money when K— goes to Meerut and reports to me exactly as matters stand. Try to open a centre at Ajmere. * * Pandit Agnihotri has started some Society

at Saharanpur. They wrote (to me a letter. Please keep correspondence with them. Live on friendly terms with all. Work! Work! Go on opening centres in this way. We have them already in Calcutta and Madras, and it will be excellent if you can start new ones at Meerut and Ajmere. Go on slowly starting centres at different places like that. Here all my letters etc. are to be addressed to C/o E. T. Sturdy Esq., High View, Caversham, Reading, England, and those for America, C/o Miss Phillips, 19 W. 38 Street, New York. By degrees we must spread the world over. The first thing needed is obedience. You must be ready to plunge into fire—then will work be done. * * Form societies like that at different villages in Rajputana. There you have a hint.

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

THE STORY OF JESUS' BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.*

WHEN I visited the holy city of Benares for the first time, I met, just before entering the city, a Hindu family. A young mother was riding a donkey and close to her breast she held a tiny baby. And alongside the happy mother walked an elderly man, staff in hand. And, oh, the happy expression on the man's face!

It was a typical Eastern picture. The little family had gone to worship God in Benares. Perhaps it was in obedience to a vow, that the happy couple had undertaken the long pilgrimage, to lay at the feet of Viswanath, the Lord of the Universe, their humble offering in token of their gratitude for the birth of a son.

And to my mind came the story of the holy family, Joseph and Mary, how they had journeyed to Bethlehem and how Mary gave birth to the divine child Jesus in surroundings so similar to those which the young mother must have met at Benares. For the Dharmasalas or resthouses in India are identical in appearance and accommodation with the Khans or caravansaries in Syrian

villages. The Khan is a low structure, built of rough stones, a single story high. The floor, sometimes paved, sometimes of mud is raised a foot or so above the ground. There are a series of small rooms under one roof with no front wall to them. There is no furniture. The traveller brings his blanket and sits on it cross-legged and lies down on it at night. He must cook his own food and draw his own water. Often these places are overcrowded with travellers and one may be thankful if he secures space enough to stretch himself during the night.

In Palestine it not unfrequently happens that back of the Khan, but opening unto it, is a room where the animals are housed. Such seems to have been the case in the little town of Bethlehem. In such a stable, among the hay and straw spread for the animals, Jesus' parents weary with their day's journey, passed the night, for when they came to Bethlehem,—whither the law had called them to register their names,—“there was no room for them in the inn.” In these humble surroundings the baby Jesus was born.

* Culled from different sources.

Now it happened that not far from Bethlehem, which is surrounded by fields, "there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night, when, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them." And to their happy ears were uttered the good tidings of great joy, that unto them was born that day in the city of David, a Saviour, which was Christ the Lord. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men and good will."

The shepherds, recovered from their first surprise said: "Come, let us go unto Bethlehem and see the thing which has come to pass, which the Lord made known to us."

They went up the terraced hill over the moonlit path, until they reached the summit on which the little town of Bethlehem is built. And there they found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in the manger.

What they saw was a peasant of Galilee, already beyond the prime of life and a young mother with an infant child, whom, since there was none to help her, her own hands had wrapped in swaddling clothes. That is all that the gospel tells us. But who shall say what glories might not have been witnessed by the eye of faith of the simple shepherds? For an ancient narrator tells us that at the awful moment of the nativity, the pole of heaven stood motionless. And the birds were still and the faces of all creatures were looking up. And elsewhere we are told that the childbirth was painless, that the ox and the ass kneeled down to worship Christ in the manger, that immediately after his birth, Jesus told his mother that he was the son of God and that the radiation of light from the manger-cradle illumined the place till the bystanders were forced to shade their eyes from the heavenly splendour.

Were the narrators of these wonder-events perhaps acquainted with the birth-stories of other Sons of God? Certain it is that there is a great similarity between all these stories. Of Lord Krishna it is written that he was born in a prison, under danger of being killed by the tyrant king Kansa. And we are told that immediately after Sri Krishna was born the whole place was illumined

by a celestial light which emanated from the body of the new-born Saviour. Then angels appeared in the cell singing praises of Krishna and his holy mother and the angels bowed down at his feet and called him God and worshipped him with flowers, while celestial music filled the air. And the seven gates of the prison opened mysteriously and the father escaped with the child.

And of the nativity of Buddha we read how the tree bent down to make a bower about Queen Maya and the earth put forth a thousand sudden flowers to spread a couch, while ready for the bath, the rock hard by gave out a limpid stream of crystal flow. And how among the strangers came a grey-haired saint, Asita, one whose ears long closed to earthly things caught heavenly sounds and heard the Devas singing songs at Buddha's birth. And after touching eight times the dust, he spoke: O Babe! I worship thee! Thou art He! Thou art the Buddha and thou wilt preach the law and save all flesh who learn the law.

And so it is said of the great prophet Zoroaster that angels came to worship and that his birth was heralded by a star and other signs and omens.

How long the Virgin mother Mary and her holy child Jesus, stayed in the Khan, we cannot tell. But probably it was not long, as the early removal of the mother and the child to some more appropriate resting-place, is quite likely. However we are told that on the fortieth day after the nativity, the mother presented herself with her Babe for their purification in the Temple of Jerusalem.

It was on this occasion that the infant Jesus was recognised as the Saviour of mankind by a just and devout Israelite endowed with the gift of prophecy. And it was revealed to this holy man that he could not see death until he had seen the Messiah. And the Spirit led him into the Temple and when he saw the babe Jesus, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen the Saviour." And blessing the parents he departed from the Temple. In the Arabic gospel it is said that Simeon recognised Jesus because he saw him shining like a pillar of light in his mother's arms.

Now it happened, when Jesus was born at Bethlehem that there came wise men from the

East. Who they were we do not know. There is nothing but a mass of confused tradition to throw any light on their rank, their country, or their names. Whether they were Arabian kings or oriental scholars or astrologers, we know not. But St. Matthew tells us that the motive of their journey was to discover the Saviour whose birth had been indicated by a strange star. They first went to Jerusalem expecting to find the child there. And it came to pass that Herod the cruel tyrant-king heard of their arrival. He learned that they had come to worship a child which was to become king of the Jews, for so Jesus was called by the prophets. But this was meant in a spiritual sense and not in a worldly sense as was then generally believed. And Herod, a mere usurper of the throne, became frightened at the news. He summoned to his palace the leading priests of the Jews to enquire of them where this future king was to be born. He received the reply that Bethlehem was the town mentioned by the ancient prophets. Then Herod at once decided to kill the child if it could be found. But he concealed his evil intention and sent the wise men to Bethlehem, bidding them to let him know as soon as they had found the child. For—so the crafty king told them—he wanted to come and offer his homage to the child.

And so the wise men departed. "And lo, the star which they saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over the place where Jesus was." And they rejoiced finding the child and they fell down worshipping him. And they opened their treasures and presented unto him gifts worthy of a king.

When they had offered their gifts, the wise men would naturally have returned to Herod to bring him the good news. But they were warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, so they returned to their own land by another way.

We may well suppose that the wise men had told the parents of Jesus about their dream. And when they departed—so it is written—behold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying: Arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt and be thou there until I bring thee word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Egypt was the natural place of refuge, for there

they were beyond the reach of Herod's jurisdiction. And so the holy family fled by night from Bethlehem to Egypt and later returned to their native home of Nazareth when Joseph had again been assured by a dream that it would be safe to go back.

Legends tell us how on the way back to Nazareth the lions and leopards came to the child but left it unharmed. And roses blossomed wherever his little footsteps trod, the palm-trees at his bidding bent down to give their dates and robbers overawed by the majesty of the child, fled away. The Bible neither tells us where the holy family abode in Egypt, nor how long their exile continued. But legend again tells us that they remained in Egypt two years and that they lived a few miles north-east of Cairo, where a fountain was long shown of which the boy Jesus had made the water fresh and an old sycamore tree under which they had rested.

The flight into Egypt led to a very memorable event. Seeing that the wise men had not returned to him, Herod became furious. He had now no means of identifying the royal infant. But he knew that Jesus whom he regarded as his future rival, was yet an infant at the breast. And as Eastern mothers usually suckle their children for two years, he issued the fell mandate to slay all the children of Bethlehem and its neighbourhood from two years old and under.

Nazareth lies on the slopes of steep and lofty hills. And its houses built of limestone, bowered in vines, palms and olive trees make a bright picture, to which the richness of the surrounding country adds its charm. And in this lovely country Jesus spent nearly thirty years of his mortal life. About his manner of life during these thirty years the gospels are silent. They only tell us that "Jesus grew up in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man."

Jesus was one of a large family of boys and girls whose parents belonged to the working-class, the father being a carpenter.

Quiet and simple and humble was the outward life of the family. The children of Nazareth are dressed in many-coloured garments. And those who have watched their noisy and merry games and heard their ringing laughter as they play beside the fountain, may perhaps form some conception of how Jesus looked and played when he too was a child.

Mary, like others of her rank, would spin and cook food and evening by evening visit the fountain with her pitcher carried on her head. Jesus would play and learn and help his parents in their daily tasks and visit the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And perhaps he would often hide himself in some secluded spot and fold his little hands and pray to God.

Joseph instructed the boy in the law and beyond this and learning to read and write, the book knowledge of Jesus did not go.

Now it was the custom of the parent of the Lord to visit Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And now Jesus being twelve years of age they took the boy with them. It was perhaps the first break in the still, secluded life, his first glimpse into the great outer world.

Nazareth lies from Jerusalem at a distance of about eighty miles. The number who flocked to the Passover might be counted by tens of thousands. They were far more than the city could accommodate. And the vast number of pilgrims would rear for themselves little booths of mat and wicker-work, which provided them with a sufficient shelter for all their wants. The feast lasted for a week,—a week of great happiness and strong religious emotions. And after the feast, the vast caravan would clear away their temporary dwelling places and start on their homeward journey.

The road was enlivened by song and music and the pilgrims would pause to refresh themselves with dates and melons and water from springs and running streams. The veiled women and the stately old men were generally mounted, while the young people with long sticks in their hands, led along by a string their beasts of burden. The boys and children would walk and play by the side of their parents, and sometimes, when tired, get a lift on horse or mule. Among such a sea of human beings, how easy would it be to lose one young boy!

Jesus, probably absorbed in the rush of new and elevating emotions, had lost his parents and "he tarried behind in Jerusalem." A day elapsed before the parents discovered their loss. They probably thought that the boy was with some other group of friends or relatives. But when evening came and the caravan halted for the night's rest, they learned the bitter fact that Jesus was missing

from the band of returning pilgrims. So the next day in alarm and anxiety they retraced their steps to Jerusalem.

Neither on that day nor during the night, nor throughout a considerable part of the third day, did they discover him, till at last they found Jesus in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. He was there, an eager-hearted and gifted boy, whose enthusiasm kindled their admiration. They were all charmed with the pure and noble-hearted boy.

Here then, seated at the feet of the teachers, Joseph and Mary found their divine son. They were awe-struck to find him, calm and happy, in so august a gathering. But Mary ventures to address him in the language of tender reproach: "My child, why dost thou treat us thus? See, thy father and I were seeking thee with aching hearts." And then follows his innocent and simple answer: "Why is it that ye were seeking me? Did ye not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

These are the first recorded words of Jesus.

The temple was visited several times every day during the feast and it seems rather strange that Joseph did not go there first when searching for his pious son. And Jesus' answer is not so unnatural from such a spiritual boy. Still, we read: "And they understood not the saying which he spoke unto them."

However that may be, Jesus followed his parents to Nazareth and "was subject unto them. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man."

These few closing words comprise all that we are told about Jesus from his twelfth year till he had long entered upon manhood. Here thus ends the story of Jesus' childhood.

The boy Jesus must have had his little troubles, his little fights and quarrels perhaps, as every boy has, brought up in a large family. His abundant vitality must have led him into little mischievous acts perhaps, for holy children are often naughty children. But these little outbursts of childish energy did not make Jesus any the less dear to the heart of his mother and friends, nor of the devotees.

Of Sri Krishna we are told that in his childhood he played many a naughty prank. But the devotees

love the child even in his naughtiness. So a Hindu saint tells us how the little Gopal, as Sri Krishna was called, once went into the dairy to eat the fresh butter. He is discovered and the dairy woman says: "Who are you, child?" "Well, lady, do not you know me? I am Gopal." "But what are you doing in my dairy, you naughty child?" "Oh, I thought it was my home, lady." "But why do I find your hand in the buttercup?" "Oh, lady, do not be offended. I am searching for a missing calf." And the poet sings: "Oh, may that naughty boy who so readily answered the shepherd's wife, enter into our hearts!"

And then the boy comes home one day and he cries: "Oh, mother, please give me the cup." "What for, my child?" "To drink milk, mother." "But, my boy, there is no milk now, wait till evening, when the cows come home." "When will that be, mother?" "When the darkness sets in, my darling." Then Gopal closes his eyes and says: "Mother, now it is dark, please give me the milk." And the devotee sings: "Oh, may the beautiful form of that sweet and clever boy, the

lovely shepherd boy who dwells in the heart of saints in meditation, the charming Gopal who played with the shepherd-lasses, fulfil our desires! Oh sweet child, grant me your sight, show me your lovely face." And many a Hindu saint in deep meditation has had a vision of the lovely child Gopal. And we have heard of Roman Catholic saints who have been blessed with a vision of the holy child Jesus.

"In whatever form the devotee longs to see Me," says Sri Krishna, "in that very form I appear before him." Blessed are such visions, blessed is the devout heart that enters into such close communion with God. Blessed be the child Jesus, blessed be the Lord in whatever form He reveals Himself to His children.

We bow down before all great Incarnations. And we pray with the divine boy Prahlad: "Oh, Lord, the intense love that man has for worldly objects, may we have that same love for Thee and Thee alone; and that only for Thine own sake!"

GURUDASA.

WITH THE SWAMIS IN AMERICA.

III.

SUCH were the early days of the Vedanta movement in New York. Simplicity and earnestness was the predominating note in those days. The Society had rented a house in one of the modest quarters of the city. Here the Swami Abhedananda lived, here he met his students and held his classes. The parlour being rather small, a hall was rented for his Sunday lectures. The audiences gradually increased in number and one after the other, large halls were necessary.

The Sunday lectures appeared in print and these, together with the different publications on Vedanta, were offered for sale at the hall and at the Vedanta headquarters.

The Swami became popular and his work increased. He was a very busy man, lecturing, holding classes, giving private instructions and writing books on Vedanta. The Society flourished, the intellectual world was attracted. The Swami was invited to speak before University assemblies

and to address different clubs and societies. What had begun in a private, unostentatious manner, developed into a public movement. The Society was reorganised and the headquarters removed to a better section of the city. Different classes of students enlisted as members, and the Vedanta Society became a busy centre.

The change was natural, inevitable. Nothing remains stationary in life, it is growth or decay. But the old students did not like the change so much. They preferred the quiet simplicity of early days. This also was natural. They had experienced the benefit of small, more intimate gatherings at some student's home where every one knew each other. There was a close bond between these few students and their teacher. And with larger classes and many strangers dropping in, the atmosphere changed. Perhaps it was not quite reasonable to expect that things would go on exactly on the old footing. Anyhow the Swami felt

that he was called to reach out beyond his little circle, that his message had to go forth to all quarters, that the success of his work necessitated his meeting with the intellectual and well-to-do people of New York; that Vedanta was not for the few, but for the many.

It was at this stage of the Vedanta movement that the Swami Turiyananda appeared on the scene. He had just come from India via England with the Swami Vivekananda who was then the guest of Mr. Leggett, the president of the society, at his country home.

"Fresh from India," was in itself a recommendation in the sight of the old students. We do not want a westernised Swami; business and lecturing we have enough in America; we want a simple, meditative man,—was their attitude.

Right or wrong, this was the state of affairs. Swami Abhedananda, always strong and positive, followed his own counsel. He wanted to spread Vedanta, he had to follow his own plan. And he flourished. He became a very fine speaker. He enriched the Vedanta literature with a goodly number of his productions. He was called to other cities to lecture. He was loved, admired and applauded wherever he went.

The Swami Turiyananda was deputed by Swamiji to assist Swami Abhedananda in the New York work. This he did in his own quiet way. He took charge of the meditation class, conducted the children's class and gave short talks to the students. And during the absence of the Swami Abhedananda he lectured at the Vedanta headquarters. Many of the old students rallied around him, he got a little following of his own.

"Fresh from India," was a fit term for the Swami. The Indian atmosphere still seemed to hover about him. He was far from being Americanised. He represented India as the old students pictured her,—the land of simplicity, of meditation and of spirituality. Gentle, cheerful, meditative, little concerned about the things of this world, he made a deep impression on the minds of those who took Vedanta most seriously,—not as a philosophy to satisfy the intellect alone, but also as a practical guidance in their spiritual life.

And so we had two Swamis of different temperament, attracting the different students.

With the coming of Swami Turiyananda the

work that was spreading out became also intensified, for in him the fire of spirituality was always burning, ready to flame up at the least occasion. It was my good fortune for several years to be closely associated with him. What had been implanted in me by the loving care of the Swami Abhedananda, was now protected and nourished by the new Swami. Swami Abhedananda went ahead, ploughed new fields, planted new seeds. Swami Turiyananda took charge of the growing plants. But be it understood, the Swami Abhedananda kept a loving, watchful eye over his old students. If he could not give them the time and attention of former days, he never forgot them or ceased to love them. And it was perhaps during these very days that I saw in him the most unmistakable marks of a tender, loving heart.

I have related my first meeting with the Swami Abhedananda, let me now put down my meeting with and impressions of the Swami Turiyananda.

The news then had reached the Society that a new Swami was coming from India. We were anxiously expecting him. We are always greedy, it seems, for something new, a change, some excitement. We were on the tiptoe of expectation, an expectation that was not to be disappointed. The Swami was to be with us on a certain date. As usual, I went to the Vedanta Society after my work of the day was over. And that evening my first question was, almost before I entered the room, Has the new Swami come? A few of the members were there. Some were busy with Society work, others were talking together.

Adjoining the parlour was another room. It was kept dark except on evenings when there was a meeting. "Yes," was the reply, "the Swami has come, he is in the other room." I peeped in and there in the dark I saw the Swami alone, meditating. I thought this rather extraordinary. But not wishing to disturb him I withdrew into the parlour and joined my fellow students. Some had dropped in just for a moment and were leaving again. Only three of us remained. The two who stayed with me had met the Swami earlier in the evening. At last the Swami emerged from the darkness and joined us.

In appearance the Swami Turiyananda was quite a contrast to Swami Abhedananda. He was of shorter stature and his features were less classical.

But his manner was winning. His face was bright and open, as we find it in youths. He was probably a few years older than Swami Abhedananda. The latter also looked young for his years. He looked like a young, dashing college graduate. The Swami Turiyananda's face was like that of a happy, intelligent, thoughtful youth; at times very much so. In fact, as later I observed, his expression of face was subject to moods, more markedly than I have ever noticed in any human face. Sometimes his face indicated tremendous strength and an indomitable will-power, at other times remoteness as if his mind was withdrawn from the external world, sometimes he looked the picture of humility and again his face would be like that of a child, innocence and purity written in every line.

The Swami entered the room smiling. I was introduced to him. His manner was easy and I felt as if I was meeting with an old friend. "Oh, you have come," he said, "I have heard about you." I told the Swami how glad we all were to have him with us. "You see, Swami, we love India and every one and everything that comes from that holy land."

The Swami smiled. "That is good," he said, "and though I have not been in this country long," (he had been some time with Swamiji at Mr. Leggett's country home after coming from England) "though I have not been in this country long, I feel quite at home here. It is not as strange as I thought it would be. Human nature, I see, is the same everywhere. I feel as if I have come amongst friends."

"And so you have, Swami," I replied. Again he smiled. "Good! good!" he said. "Yes, you are all Mother's children and I know that you love India." Then we exchanged a few personal questions. "Did you have a pleasant sea voyage, have you been sea-sick, how is your health in this country?" etc. The Swami asked me about my age and occupation, etc. Then he said: "See here, Mr. K. knows a little Sanskrit." "Yes, Swami," I replied, "he is so clever. I am afraid you will be disgusted with me. I do not know even the Sanskrit alphabet."

"Oh, never mind," he said, "what shall you do with Sanskrit? It takes a lifetime to master it, you can use your time better. Be Mother's child

and think always of Her. But Mr. K., I see, is a very good man, he is past middle age and yet he is not married. Is not that excellent?"

"Yes, Swami, he is one of the old students, he is our best friend and he knows Swamiji."

"Oh, I am so glad. You will also know Swamiji, in time."

"Swami," I said, "did Mr. K. repeat Sanskrit Slokas to you?"

"No, he only told me that he was studying a little Sanskrit."

"Oh, Mr. K.," I said, "do give us some of your Slokas. Swami will be so glad to hear them." Mr. K. did not require much urging as well I knew and at once he began: *Vasansi jirnani yathā vihaya* etc. "As a man casting off worn-out garments takes new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-out bodies entereth into others that are new."

"Ah, ah! how nice! Go on Mr. K. it is excellent," said the Swami. Mr. K. beamed all over; he was so pleased that the Swami liked the Slokas. Then the Swami spoke to me and said: "You are also not married, I hear."

"No, Swami, I am a Brahmacharin. Swami Abhedananda has now taught us to look upon all women as our mother and I try to do that."

"Yes, yes, the Master taught us that way. That is the safest way, go on and remember it. Our Master had realised that every woman is the representative of the Divine Mother. He saw the Divine Mother in every one, good, bad or indifferent. I am so glad. Siva! Siva! I have already met with so many nice people, both in England and here."

"But, Swami, we are so active and materialistic, does not the hurry and bustle of Western life annoy you?"

"Yes, as a race you are very materialistic, but I have met with exceptions. And activity is not bad. I like your energy, you are all up and doing, I see no idleness anywhere. Only that energy should be controlled. It should go inward also, activity in inactivity. But not laziness, mind you. But you are a young race, you must enjoy a little. We in India do not know how to enjoy life, we have forgotten that. You will gradually pay more attention to the spiritual side of life and we will get a little more material comfort and enjoyment. That will come the more East and West meet

together. We both have to learn. But India holds the highest ideals. The West has not yet appreciated that. But it is coming. Hari aum tat sat." Then the Swami began to chant in a very low voice: Aum, aum, aum. Hari aum.

And so we were talking in a free and easy manner, when our lady friend, who was in charge of the rooms, called out: "Swami, do you know what time it is? It is almost midnight. I am going to turn out the lights, otherwise you will keep us here all night and our friends will be late at their offices to-morrow."

"Yes, yes," said the Swami, "I forgot all about the time, I am so happy to be with you all."

"Never mind, Swami," I said, "the office does not begin till nine o'clock in the morning. There is plenty of time yet. What do you say, Mr. K.?" Mr. K. smiled and said: "I am not in a hurry." But anyhow we took leave of the Swami and we told him that we would come back the following day.

We were so happy! Mr. K. walked home with me part of the way. He was a simple, good-hearted man. And this evening he was like a boy. Well, I was as boy-like as he was and we talked and talked about the new Swami. I did not get much sleep that night. I do not know how Mr. K. fared, but the next evening I found him with the Swami again when I reached the Vedanta Home. And so evening after evening we met with the Swami, others joining us at times. We became closely and intimately acquainted with him.

The chant which I have mentioned was an outstanding feature with the Swami. Every one remarked about it and seemed impressed by it. It was new to us and I may be allowed to make a few remarks about it.

This chant was peculiar with the Swami. He would keep it up for hours at a time. When he was talking he would chant in between. After asking a question he would chant while listening to the reply. Walking, sitting, talking, in public or alone, always that soft, melodious chant went on. Sometimes it was rather amusing in our conventional Western life. In a crowded street car, the Swami unconcerned about his surroundings would sit softly chanting, to the surprise and wonderment of the other passengers. But the Swami seemed quite unconscious of that. Often I noticed the

passengers look at each other smiling. Of course there was not the least offence. Only it seemed to amuse them in this brown-faced stranger.

Before and after our meditations the chant would come in full strength. It was not only beautiful, it was also helpful, especially before meditation. It had the effect of quieting the mind and of creating an atmosphere. I may compare it with the effect produced by the burning of incense in a Roman Catholic church.

Sometimes the chant would come loud and strong, again it would be deep like a strong vibration, it would run up and end in a soft high note, very sweet. The tune also varied. This chant was with the Swami as long as he was in America. Aum, aum, Hari aum, it would go on and on.

I did not quite understand it at the time but now I realise how by this chant the Swami kept up an inward flow of unbroken meditation and how often it had the effect of making us pause and collect our scattered minds, drawing us inward also. But it was entirely natural with him. It came of itself, without the least effort.

Sometimes, especially later in the Shanti Ashrama, when we would be indulging in light talk we would suddenly hear the chant from the distance, coming louder and louder as the Swami approached us. And invariably it would put an end to our light talk and make us remember what we were at the Ashrama for. The object of our being there was never kept far from us any way. But of this later. It was one of the means.

Another peculiarity with the Swami was, that while talking with a person, softly chanting in between, he would sometimes look remote as if he were only half listening, as if his mind were elsewhere. This was often puzzling and misleading, especially when the Swami was slow in answering a question. It was sometimes thought that he was not interested in the subject or did not like to be drawn outward. But this was not the case. I noticed that he never lost the drift of the conversation and that his answers were always to the point. Once I questioned the Swami about it and he replied: "There are two ways of answering a question; one way is to answer from the intellect, the other way is to answer from within. I always try to answer from within."

Considering the nature of these answers, how a

few words could give so much satisfaction to the questioner, it seems that this way of answering from within is most effective, it is answering by insight and is possible only for highly trained and concentrated minds. The answers were like flashes of illumination. The Swami would always keep his eyes towards the questioner and it seems to me that during this process of answering he got a glimpse of the mental state of the questioner. I know that this was sometimes the case with Swami Abhedananda, even when answering questions from the platform. His answer would then be more to the individual than to the audience. And so it sometimes happened that the answer was far more satisfactory to the questioner than to the audience as a whole. I remember that once one of us asked Swami Abhedananda after his lecture, why he had answered a certain question (which I can

not recollect now, but it was about Jesus) in the way he had done. And the Swami replied: "Because it was the answer the questioner needed, —to another person I might have given quite a different answer."

It also happened with Swami Turiyananda, as we have heard it was so often the case with his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, that he would suddenly begin to discuss a subject which was troubling and weighing on the mind of some one present. There was nothing to lead up to the subject and the person in question would be surprised how the Swami happened to solve his doubt and difficulty unasked for. These, I suppose, are the higher qualifications of a real teacher,—gifts or powers that are developed through a long period of strict Brahmacharya, self-discipline and mental control.

A BRAHMACHARIN.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 260.)

मनो नाम महाव्याघ्रो विषयारण्यभूमिषु ।

चरत्यत्र न गच्छन्तु साधवो ये मुमुक्षवः ॥१७६॥

176. In the forest-tract of sense-pleasures there prowls a huge tiger called mind. Let good people who have a longing for liberation never go there.

मनः प्रसूते विषयान्नेषान्

स्थूलात्मना सूक्ष्मतया च भोक्तुः ।

शरीरवर्णाश्रमजातिभेदान्

गुणक्रियाहेतुफलानि नित्यम् ॥१७७॥

177. The mind continually produces for the experiencer all sense-objects without exception, whether perceived as gross or fine; the differences of body, caste, order of life, and tribe, as well as the varieties of qualification, action, means and results.

[*Gross or fine*—in the waking and dream states respectively.

Action—to obtain desired results.

Means—for these actions.

Results—such as enjoyment or liberation.]

असंगचिद्रूपममुं विमोहं

देहेन्द्रियप्राणागुणैर्निबद्धम् ।

अहम्मेति भ्रमयत्यजरां

मनः स्वकृत्येषु फलोपभुक्तिषु ॥१७८॥

178. Deluding the Jiva who is unattached Pure Intelligence, and binding him by the ties of body, organs and Pranas, the mind causes him to wander, with ideas of 'I' and 'mine,' amidst the varied enjoyment of results achieved by himself.

[*Binding.....Pranas*—strictly speaking, it is our attachment for these that binds us.]

अध्यासदोषात्पुरुषस्य संसृति-

रध्यासबन्धस्त्वमुनेव कल्पितः ।

रजस्तमोदोषवतोऽविवेकिनो

जन्मादिदुःखस्य निदानमेतत् ॥१७९॥

179. Man's transmigration is due to the evil of superimposition, and the bondage of superimposition is created by himself and none else. It is this that causes the

misery of birth etc. for the man of non-discrimination who is tainted by Rajas and Tamas.

[*Superimposition*—This is the favourite theme of the Vedānta Philosophy, to explain how the ever-free Self came to be bound at all. The whole thing is a mistaken identity, a self-hypnotism, it says, and the way out of it lies in de-hypnotising ourselves.

मतः प्रानुमनोऽविद्यां पण्डितास्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ।

येनैव भ्राम्यन्ते विश्वं घायुनेवाग्नमण्डलम् ॥१८०॥

180. Hence sages who have fathomed its secret have designated the mind alone as Avidya or Ignorance, by which alone the universe is moved to and fro, like masses of clouds by the wind.

तन्मनःशोधनं कार्यं प्रयत्नेन मुमुक्षुणा ।

विशुद्धं सति चेतस्मिन्मुक्तिः करफलायते ॥१८१॥

181. Therefore the seeker after Liberation must carefully purify the mind. When this is purified, Liberation is as easy of access as a fruit on the palm of one's hand.

मोक्षकसक्त्या विषयेषु रागं

निर्मूल्य संन्यस्य च सर्वकर्म ।

सच्छ्रद्धया यः भवणादिनिष्ठो

रजःसभावं स धुनोति बुद्धेः ॥१८२॥

182. He who by means of one-pointed devotion for Liberation roots out the attachment for sense-objects, renounces all actions, and with faith in the Real Brahman regularly practises hearing etc., succeeds in purging the Rajasic nature of the intellect.

[*All actions*—that are done with selfish motives.

[*Hearing etc.*—i. e. hearing (from the lips of the Guru), reflection and meditation, of the highest Vedāntic truth—the identity of the Jiva and Brahman.]

मनोमयो नापि भवेत्परात्मा

ह्याद्यन्तवत्त्वान्परिणामिभावात् ।

दुःखात्मकत्वाद्विषयत्वहेतो-

र्द्रष्टा हि दृश्यत्वतया न दृष्टः ॥१८३॥

183. Neither can the Mental Sheath be the Supreme Self, because it has a beginning and an end, is subject to modifications, is characterised by pain and suffering, and is an object. Whereas the subject can never be identified with the objects of knowledge.

[*Is an object*—cognisable by the Self which is the eternal subject.]

बुद्धिर्बुद्धीन्द्रियैः साद्धं सवृत्तिः कर्तृलक्षणः ।

विज्ञानमयकोशः स्यात्पुंसः संसारकारणम् ॥१८४॥

184. Buddhi with its modifications and the organs of knowledge, having the characteristics of the agent, forms the Vijnānamaya Kosha or Knowledge Sheath, which is the cause of man's transmigration.

[*Buddhi*—the determinative faculty.

[*Modifications*—such as Egoism etc.

[*Having.....agent*—thinking 'I am the agent.']

अनुव्रजचित्प्रतिविम्बशक्ति-

र्विज्ञानसंज्ञः प्रकृतेर्विकारः ।

ज्ञानक्रियावानहमित्यजस्रं

द्वेहेन्द्रियादिष्वभिमन्यते भृशम् ॥१८५॥

185. This Knowledge Sheath, which seems to be followed by a reflection of the power of the Chit, is a modification of the Prakriti, is endowed with the function of knowledge, and always wholly identifies itself with the body and the organs etc.

[*Followed.....Chit*—The Knowledge Sheath is in reality material and insentient, but a reflection of the Chit or Atman makes it appear as intelligent.

[*Modification etc.*—and therefore insentient.]

अनादिकालोऽयमहंस्वभावो

जीवः समस्तव्यवहारबोद्धा ।

करोति कर्माण्यपि पूर्ववासनः

पुण्यान्यपुण्यानि च तत्फलानि ॥१८६॥

भुङ्क्ते विचित्रास्वपि योनिषु व्रज-

न्नायाति निर्यात्यध ऊर्ध्वमेव ।

अस्यैव विज्ञानमयस्य जायत-

स्वप्नाद्यवस्थाः सुखदुःखभोगः ॥१८७॥

186-7. It is without beginning, characterised by egoism, is called the Jiva, and carries on all the activities on the relative plane. Through previous desires it performs good and evil actions, and experiences their results. Being born in various bodies it comes and goes, up and down. It is this Knowledge Sheath that has the waking, dream and other states and experiences joy and grief.

[*Previous desires*—desires of previous births.

Comes and goes, up and down—is born and dies, in higher or lower bodies.]

देहादिनिष्ठाश्रमधर्मकर्म-

गुणाभिमानं सततं ममेति ।

विज्ञानकोशोऽयमतिप्रकाराः

प्रकृष्टान्निध्वंशत्परात्मनः ।

अतो भवत्येष उपाधिरस्य

यदात्मधीः संसरति भ्रमेण ॥१८८॥

188. It always mistakes the duties, functions and attributes of the orders of life which belong to the body, as its own. The Knowledge Sheath is exceedingly effulgent, owing to its close proximity to the Supreme Self, which identifying itself with it suffers transmigration through delusion. It is therefore a superimposition on the Self.

[*Orders of life*—Ashramas.]

योऽयं विज्ञानमयः प्राणेषु हृदि स्फुरत्ययं ज्योतिः ।

कूटस्थः सन्नात्मा कर्ता भोक्ता भवत्युपाधिरस्य ॥१८९॥

189. The self-effulgent Atman which is Pure Knowledge, shines in the midst of the Pranas, within the heart. Though immutable, It becomes the agent and experiencer owing to Its superimposition—the Knowledge Sheath.

[The first part of this Sloka is a quotation from Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. IV. iii. 7.

In the midst of the Pranas—great nearness is meant. Prana means force, here the physiological and mental forces are referred to.

Within the heart—in Buddhi, the seat of which is supposed to be the heart.

स्वयं परिच्छेदमुपेत्य बुद्धे-

स्तादात्म्यदोषेणा परं मृपात्मनः ।

सर्वात्मकः सन्नपि वीक्षते स्वयं

स्वतः पृषक्त्वेन मृदो घटानिघ ॥१९०॥

190. Though the Self of everything that exists, this Atman, Itself assuming the limitations of the Buddhi and wrongly identifying Itself with this totally unreal entity, looks upon Itself as something different,—like earthen jars from the earth of which they are made.

[*Buddhi*—here stands for the Knowledge-Sheath.

As something different—as conditioned and bound, just an ignorant man may consider earthen pots as something distinct from the earth of which they are made. The wise man knows that the difference is simply due to name and form, which are creations of the mind.]

उपाधिसम्बन्धवशात्परात्मा

क्षुपाधिधर्माननुभाति तद्गुणः ।

अयोर्विकारानविकारिवद्विबतः

सदैकरूपोऽपि परः स्वभावात् ॥१९१॥

191. Owing to its connection with the superimpositions the Supreme Self, even though naturally perfect and eternally unchanging, assumes the qualities of the superimpositions and appears to act just as they do—like the changeless fire assuming the modifications of the iron which it turns red-hot.

[*Naturally perfect*—Or the phrase परः स्वभावात् may mean “transcending Nature.”

Modifications—such as size, shape etc.]

शिष्य उवाच ।

भ्रमेणाप्यन्यथा वाऽस्तु जीवभावः परात्मनः ।

तदुपाधेरनादित्वाज्ञानादेर्नारा इष्यते ॥१९२॥

192. The disciple questioned, “Be it through delusion or otherwise that the Supreme Self has come to consider Itself

as the Jiva, this superimposition is without beginning, and that which has no beginning cannot be supposed to have an end either.

[*Jiva*—individual soul, or the Self under self-imposed limitations.]

अतोऽस्य जीवभावोऽपि नित्या भवति संसृतिः ।
न निवर्त्तेन तन्मोक्षः कथं मे श्रीगुरो वद ॥१६३॥

193. "Therefore the Jivahood of the Soul also must have no end, and its transmigration continue for ever. How then can there be liberation for the Soul? Kindly enlighten me on this point, O revered Teacher."

[*Jivahood*—the self-hypnotised state of the ever-free Atman.]

श्रीगुरुवाच ।

सम्यक् पृष्टं त्वया चित्तन्सावधानेन तच्छृणु ।
प्रामाण्यं न भवति भ्रान्त्या मोहितकल्पना ॥१६४॥

194. The Teacher replied: 'Thou hast rightly questioned, O learned one! Listen thou therefore attentively: The imagination which has been conjured up by delusion can never be accepted as a fact.'

भ्रान्तिं विना त्वसङ्गस्य निष्क्रियस्य निराकृतः ।
न घटेतार्थसम्बन्धो नभसो नीलतादिबन्ध ॥१६५॥

195. But for delusion there can be no connection of the Self—which is unattached, beyond activity and formless—with the objective world, as in the case of blueness etc. with reference to the sky.

[*Blueness etc.*—The sky has no colour of its own but we mentally associate blueness with it. The blueness is in our *mind*, and not in the sky. Similarly, limitation exists not in the Absolute Self, but in our own minds.]

(To be continued).

TRUE SACRIFICE.

(A Story from the Bhagavata.)

IN days of yore there lived in Northern India a great king named Rantideva. Little is known of his parents, who do not seem to have been celebrities. How this prodigy came of such a stock, heredity is powerless to explain.

Rantideva was a peculiar king. We might as well call him a beggar. Royalty is ever associated with wealth and power, pomp and splendour. But king Rantideva had none of these. And yet he was a great king, and has bequeathed his name to posterity.

He was a saintly king. He used to depend solely upon the Lord for his subsistence and had kept his treasures open to all that might be in need of them. He took no thought of himself and his family and would starve himself and give away everything as it came to him.

There is no end to the world's misery, and the fame of the king's benevolence having spread far and wide it was not long before his vast pro-

perty came to nothing. Matters came to such a pass that the king and his family had neither food nor drink for several weeks. The king, as we have said, would ask of nobody, and remained steady, though the demands of the flesh were almost unbearable.

The Kshatriyas were a hardy race famous for their fortitude. On the morning of the forty-ninth day, it is said, some food and water came to the famished monarch. The royal family was sorely in need of them, and the king himself was feeling his limbs giving way. With eagerness they were going to do justice to the things, when a Brahmin guest presented himself before them. The king cordially received him and gave him portions of the food and water with becoming courtesy, for he was in the habit of looking for the Lord everywhere. The Brahmin satisfied his hunger and went his way.

The king then divided the remaining food and

water among his family and proceeded to take his own share, when a Sudra came to him as guest, King Rantideva thought of the Lord and gave the Sudra of his own share. The guest took his leave satisfied.

Shortly after there came another man with a pack of hounds, and said, "Sire, myself and these dogs of mine are hungry. Please give us food." The King welcomed these new guests as cordially, thinking himself highly honoured by their presence, gave them the food that still remained, and saluted the dogs and their owner.

Now there was only a little water left, barely enough to allay the thirst of a single man, and the King was about to drink it, when a poor man of an "untouchable" caste came and piteously appealed to him with the words, "O King, I am mortally tired. Deign to give this 'unholy' outcast just a little water." The appealing words of the man and the tale of his terrible fatigue deeply stirred the feelings of the noble king, and melting with pity he spoke to the man in a tone that almost took away his sufferings, "I do not seek that God would grant me admission to an exalted state where all divine power would be mine, nor do I care for Mukti,—but this is my earnest wish that I may enter into the bodies of all beings to take upon myself all their sufferings so that they may be set at ease! I was just now suffering from hunger and thirst and fatigue, my body was reeling and I was feeling dejected and miserable. But all these troubles of mine shall be at rest, by this offering of a little water to a poor being struggling for life." Saying this, though almost dying of thirst, the magnanimous king gave the man whom society sneered at as untouchable, the water which might save his own life.

In an instant the scene shifted. Before such a gigantic will-power the veils of Maya are rent open. The world-Gods, Brahmâ and the rest, who had assumed the forms of the Brahmin, Sudra and other guests to test the king's piety, could no longer hide their identity but stood revealed in their majestic forms, ready to confer on the king any boons he might ask. To one who desires enjoyments the sight of these Divinities means the consummation of his life's efforts. But on Rantideva whose whole soul was in the Oneness of Brahman, and who looked upon the Universe as the manifestation of

that Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, temptations of enjoyment could produce no effect. He simply bowed before the Gods and held his mind fast in the Supreme Lord, who is beyond the realm of relativity and who yet appears through His unimaginable powers as this universe of names and forms. He asked for no boons.

The Gods departed highly pleased with the saintly king's devotion. He had come out of the test triumphant. By his sacrificing himself for the sake of others and his utter disregard for enjoyments of the senses, he won his way to the life of a Jivan-mukta,—freed in this very life. Maya with all Her charms could no more allure him, and he was henceforth eternally satisfied with the Vision Beatific of his own Self as the Self of all.

King Rantideva is dead and gone, we mean, the fleshy vesture which clothed his soul. But his memory will be cherished by humanity as a priceless treasure as long as there is such a thing as unselfish love and self-sacrifice on this earth.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SWAMI PRAJNANANDA—AN APPRECIATION.

Ridgeley Manor, Stone Ridge, N.Y.,
July 25, 1918.

To the Editor of the Prabuddha Bharata.

Sir,

The news of the death of Swami Prajnananda, conveyed by the May issue of the Prabuddha Bharata, is not only a personal loss but also is a severe blow to our country at the present crisis. My debt to Swami Prajnananda, as well as that of many others, has been too great to be stated fully at any time but I must say now what I wish I had said when that great spirit was amongst us.

You will agree with me that the late Swami Prajnananda was one of the very few gifted ones who perceived the value and significance of the life and work of the Swami Vivekananda. Our modern scholarship and life have been suffering under the tremendous impact of Western influences. Swami Vivekananda seems to be the sole person who not only removed the staggering

effect of that impact has created a positive force which we may now say is going to shape permanently the growing spirituality of India and of the whole world.

The life and inspiration of Swami Vivekananda have been of great influence in India and their significance has been revealed to us by Swami Prajnananda in a manner that none can rival. So far we have been all labouring under a heavy scholarship which owed its inspiration to Hegelianism. Hegelianism is very good for itself and for the race culture that produced it. In our case however it was not native to our racial traditions and ideals. Hegel is an expression of European life and thought-process. On the contrary our life and thought, if not opposed, are at least far different from those of Europe. To state this in simple terms, Hegel believed in the "historical view-point" and in "the concrete-universal" to borrow a phrase from Bosanquet. Now the difficulty of the "historical view-point" is that it reads every phenomenon, particularly that of human life, in terms of what has gone before and after it. In other words, the "historical view-point" relies on temporal events. It is altogether based on what is called "the time-process." How far time, philosophically speaking, is real or illusory is not the question here, but it is clear to us as Hindus that time is apparent, that is to say, a phase of Maya—consequently to us the "time-process" means very little. The "historical view-point" of Hegel which is based upon such "time-process," cannot be at all conducive to any lasting virtue in our thought process.

We notice also that the "concrete universal" suffers from what we should call a weakness, viz. that the Absolute though inclusive is not all-pervasive. Hegel's "Absolute" is a logical deduction and not a felt and realisable existence.

To the Hindu the Absolute, which means complete inclusiveness, is not only knowable but should be realised. That is why from the days of the Vedas the Hindu has repeated the words, "to know is to be," for the Absolute pervades everything. Just compare the case of Hegel with that of Sankara, Buddha and Vivekananda. Hegel knew of the Absolute. But Buddha not only knew Nirvana but became Nirvana. Sankara not only knew the Absolute but became identical with It. Similar-

ly Swami Vivekananda not only knew the Truth but became the Truth. Can we say the same about Hegel? To conclude, then, the Hindu view-point of the Absolute is that It is not a logical deduction created out of the intellectual processes of a German mind, but a through and through perception and a personal realisation of a living reality.

Can you imagine a race born to the Hindu view-point of the Absolute ever looking up to the Hegelian Absolute for light? Swami Prajnananda saw the utter incongruity of that and putting his articles together as they appeared in the Prabuddha Bharata we can see that he was successfully combating this pernicious and slavish adoration of Hegelianism. He pointed out to us that our salvation is and always will be in the continuity of the Hindu spiritual tradition that rose from the fountain of the Vedas and has come down through Swami Vivekananda. You cannot engraft Hegelianism on Hinduism. In fact you cannot make a Western Hindu, and Swami Vivekananda was the first enemy of such abortive effort. Swami Prajnananda has made that clear to us in a way that no one else could. He not only had the scholarship necessary for such a task but he had the inspiration that very few modern scholars can equal. With that to start with, his task, though not an easy one, was certain of realisation.

Swami Prajnananda has distinguished Indian history and life in terms not equivocal. In the main he has dissipated the last gloom that has hung over us since the days when the first Hindu took to worshipping Hegel in particular, and the European culture in general.

The European culture of to-day draws its strength from two diverse sources, viz., Hellenism, and Hebraism transmuted through Christianity. Hegel, who was a thorough expression of modern European culture, tries to state in logical terms the synthesis of Hellenism and Hebraism, which is highly beneficial for Europe and the West in general. On the contrary, in India our culture never comes from two foreign sources. We have no Greece or Israel to go to, but whatever Hebraism and Hellenism contributed to Europe came to us from our own soil, untouched and untarnished by an external influence. India has no need to go to foreign sources for her spiritual supplies. This was Swami Vivekananda's revelation and heartening

message to his race and Swami Prapnananda helped to make this clear to us in those few articles that he wrote for the Prabuddha Bharata.

To-day when the world agony is so intensive and thousands are dying on the field of battle or of epidemic and starvation, no Hegelian Absolute can console the heart of man. No logical and intellectual God, deduced by dialectics, can be anywhere near being able to soothe the pain of the hour. It is the God in us, illogical, unintellectual, and un-German who can sustain and strengthen the world so that it can march through the desolate fields of death into the God in whom we "live, move and have our being." Was not Swami Vivekananda right when he said a quarter of a century ago, "Europe is sitting on a volcano. If India does not come to her rescue with the religion of the Upanishds, she will blow up."

Europe has blown up. Asia is burning and America is on fire. Hegelianism has not helped matters at all. The face of the world is turning towards the East and at such a moment to receive the news of the death of Swami Prapnananda is overwhelming. And yet, who knows but that there are even worthier hands to whom the Mother is entrusting Her work in the inscrutable secrecy of Her silence? That India has the sacred waters that will wash the wounds of the world and heal them is a foregone conclusion to many of us. And it is up to us "carry on" this great work of service. Let us bear in mind that we are not the superiors of these great Westerners who are fighting the battle of another Kurukshetra. In this great world drama we have been granted the part of servants. Ours is to give what we have spiritually, as we have given materially to enhance the coming of victory. And the spiritual gift is the one that is the most difficult to give because it can be done only by a servant. The Great Carpenter has said, "The last shall be first." So though we are the servants, we are also the masters for only a servant can be a master. Let us pray with the example of Swami Prapnananda before us, that we shall be able to continue the task which he has left us. With these few inadequate words I have tried to give utterance to the gratitude that intellectually and spiritually we owe to the deathless spirit of Swami Prapnananda.

Dhan Gopal Mukerji.

RAMKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN NORTH BENGAL.

Since our report on the 10th October last waters have receded from the villages and fields even. The panic being over, the villagers have returned to their homes. With the winter before them, they are re-erecting their houses to make them as comfortable as possible, with the funds they have after all these privations. The cultivators have begun over again to re-till their fields for making them ready for 'Rabi' crops. For all these the labouring class is also getting work, though at a lower rate. The Government is helping the people with agricultural loans and by selling 'Rabi' seeds. Under the circumstances we have closed our rice distributing centres excepting Dubalhati and Hasaigari. But there are a fair number of poor families, widows and old men with minor children, who need such help yet. To such families in our area, we have decided to give some monetary help at a time so that they may use them as a capital in husking business and thereby maintain themselves from its profits or may use them in erecting their huts or in whichever way they may think it preferable. They will be distributed from the following five centres:—Noagaon, Dubalhati and Hasaigari in Thana Noagaon; and Bhandergam, Ratwal, in Thana Raninagar. We come to know that the Government has decided not to give any gratuitous relief but we know from our particular knowledge of the villagers, that there is just need of it.

17 mds. of rice were also distributed as temporary relief from all centres in these weeks. Kasimpur centre in Thana Raninagar was closed on the 5th October last. Balihar centre's 30th September's weekly report was received after the publication of the previous report; so it is included in the present one. 55 pairs of new cloths, besides old ones were also distributed during the weeks under report.

In our Hansaigari centre from the 3rd to the 23rd October last 840 cattle of nine villages were helped with 35 kahans of straw bundles in 4 weekly distributions.

Day by day the situation in North Bengal flooded area is going to be normal. Shortly we shall be able to announce that we have closed our remaining centres there. We are grateful to the generous public who have helped us either with contributions

of money or cloths in serving humanity. We also give them our heartiest thanks on behalf of the destitutes who received help in their times of need. With the funds which we have in our hands we shall be able to finish our present work in North Bengal. But we fear in near future, Heaven forbid, the people may require further help. Even now appeals for help have begun to pour in from other quarters such as the districts of Bankura, Birbhum, Puri etc. If we receive further appeals from these places we shall have to open relief centres there immediately. So we appeal to our generous countrymen to continue to send in their contributions to the Ramkrishna Mission Provident Relief Fund, at the following addresses:—(1) President, Ramkrishna Mission, the Math, Belur P.O., Howrah; (2) the Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission, Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukerji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

C. C. M.

Saradananda.

8-11-18

Secy., R. K. Mission.

NEWS AND NOTES.

It gives us great pleasure to go through the seventeenth annual report of the Ramkrishna Home of Service, Benares (Jan—Dec. 1917). Of the many Sevashramas that have come into being in India under the inspiration of the great Swami Vivekananda, this Home at the City of Benares was the first, and it is gratifying to note that it leads all such institutions in respect of its extensive scope. For instance, during the year under review no less than 16,936 persons obtained relief from the Home, of whom 6,655 were men, 4,028 women, and 6,253 children—showing an increase of 13.4 per cent over the last year's figures. The service was rendered irrespective of caste, creed or colour, and the patients hailed from all parts of India. The number of in-patients was 1016 (including the 20 inmates of the Branch Refuge at Dasaswamedh), as against 769 of the previous year. Of these 95 were picked up from the streets, ghats, and private houses and conveyed to the Home by the workers through the assistance of the local people. For want of accommodation 32 patients suffering from infectious and female diseases were sent to other hospitals of the city at the expense of the Home. Amongst the indoor cases there were 116 helpless persons who were provided with food and shelter,

and 4 invalids were being maintained in the Home.

The Home treated 23 phthisis cases as in-patients, 28 cases in their own homes as out-patients, sent 14 cases to other hospitals and helped 4 patients with diet in addition to medicines. It treated 8 small-pox cases and sent one to another hospital. In the Branch at Dasaswamedh 15 homeless aged invalid women, 4 helpless widows and a child were maintained. Of the 15,150 out-patients served by the Home, 350 were too poor to pay for their diet which was supplied to them by the Home. Besides the above, 190 persons received other kinds of regular help in money or kind, and 580 persons temporary help of this kind. The Home performed 163 operations.

The total receipts of the Home during the year amounted to Rs. 39,727-12-6, including Rs. 12,304-2-6 for the building fund. The total expenditure was Rs. 55,321-5-5 including Rs. 13,714-4-7 for building work.

From the year under review the Home has been admitting inmates to the 35 new beds in the five segregation wards built in the previous year. This has entailed an additional expenditure on the Home. Actual experience has led the Home to contemplate the building of (i) a Refuge for poor old invalids, (ii) a Home for widows and (iii) an Orphanage for the children who have fallen in its charge. The Home appeals to the generous public for funds to carry on the general work, as also to construct the above buildings. The necessity of these is self-evident, considering the fact that Benares is the city of Moksha, where people from all parts of India flock to pass their last days, and very often are thrown by circumstances on the mercy of casual charitable persons. The disinterested work of the Home speaks for itself, and we commend all pilgrims to the holy city to pay a visit to this institution, and if they are satisfied with the work done, to help it as far as in them lies. All contributions may kindly be sent to the Asst. Secy., Rk. Home of Service, Luxa, Benares City.

THE Tithi of Srīmat Swami Vivekananda's 57th birthday falls on Thursday, 23rd January, 1919. The public celebration will be held at the Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramkrishna Mission, and most branch centres on Sunday, the 26th January. The feeding of the poor Narayanas will be an important feature of the day.

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